

For more information please contact Public Affairs at (503) 335-4104 or Family Support (503) 335-4193

The Woodburn Company Stores (Point of Contact-Kristen Kummer 503-981-1900) is assisting the 142nd Fighter Wing Community Foundation to gather donations of money and clothing for wounded service members coming to Landstuhl, Germany for treatment. The gift of clothing will keep them warm and comfortable during their initial recovery. Donated money will be used for shipping costs.

Needed items can be purchased and dropped off at the Woodburn Company Stores:

T-shirts - sizes medium to xx- large

Tennis shoes – men's sizes 7-14, women's sizes 5-10

Socks

Polar fleece hats, earmuffs, neck scarves

Checks can be made out to the **142nd Fighter Wing Community Foundation** and mailed to 6801 NE Cornfoot Rd., Portland, OR 97218

More than 1700 members of the Oregon Army and Air National Guard are fighting the war on terrorism. Many of those deployed overseas are the household breadwinners, and those left behind have to do with less and struggle to make ends meet.

'Cards for the Guard' is kicking off this year, to help those who've sacrificed so much. A gift card for any amount from your favorite store can be purchased and sent to the Oregon National Guard Family Program. Gift cards from any grocery store, toy store, or department store would be a much-appreciated donation to our families. The cards will be distributed among Guard families throughout Oregon in time for the holidays.

Send gift cards to: Oregon Military Department
DCSPER-FP, Diane Gooding
P.O. Box 14350
Salem, Oregon 97309-5047

Bi-Mart Toy Drive

Bi-Mart is sponsoring a toy drive for all Guard families. Each Bi-Mart located in a city with an armory will be participating. Toys need not be bought at Bi-Mart to be donated.

Web Cam's- For Deployed Soldiers and their Families

Kay Fristad, from the Joint Forces Headquarters Public Affairs, is collecting web cameras or donations for web cameras for deployed Guard members and their families. Web cameras can cost up to \$100. Point of contact email Kay.F.Fristad@mil.state.or.us or call her at 503-584-3917.

Adopt a National Guard family isn't done due to the Privacy Act. We are unable to give out the names of families.

For other options to support the troops, visit www.defendamerica.mil

The website is a clearinghouse for charitable causes that support our military.

Guard chaplains minister to wounded troops

by Army Master Sgt. Bob Haskell

National Guard Bureau

LANDSTUHL, Germany (AFPN) -- There was no doubt in anyone's mind, including his wife's and his father's, that Arkansas Army National Guard Spc. Ronald Baker was going to die.

All that kept the man from Cabot, Ark., alive at the Landstuhl Regional Medical Center in Germany was a life support system and his wife's concern for his immortal soul.

The 34-year-old Soldier had not been baptized, and his wife needed the reassurance that Specialist Baker would leave this world as a Christian after he had been severely wounded by an improvised explosive device in Iraq on Oct. 7.

The woman, a Protestant, asked Air National Guard Chaplain (Lt. Col.) Richard Sirianni, a Roman Catholic priest, to baptize her husband because Chaplain Sirianni had been helping the comatose Soldier's wife and father since they had arrived in Germany to say their final goodbyes. The chaplain from Oregon performed the baptism, and Ron Baker was permitted to pass on Oct. 13 into what his family said would be a better place.

Chaplain Sirianni said he never talked with or got to know Specialist Baker, but he was only too glad to help comfort the family.

"His wife told me it did not matter that Ron's background was Protestant and that I was a Catholic," Chaplain Sirianni said. "What mattered to her was that I was a National Guard chaplain."

Such is the ministry that Air National Guard chaplains and chaplain assistants are performing for National Guardsmen and their families at the largest U.S. military hospital outside the United States. The two Air Guard chaplains and an assistant serving there now are among eight

chaplains and five assistants at the hospital. They are as concerned about the patients' emotional and spiritual wellbeing as the doctors and nurses are about their physical conditions.

Air Guard chaplains have been assigned to Landstuhl since May because a lot of the patients are National Guard Soldiers and Airmen who are wounded or injured in Iraq and Afghanistan. They minister to people who have lost arms and legs, and who have been badly burned, who have injured their backs, who suffer from battle fatigue, and those who will die.

Chaplain (Lt. Col.) Robert Hicks, a Baptist minister from Alabama, and Airman 1st Class Karly Vogel, a chaplain assistant from Minnesota, are also on the Air Guard team here.

These Air Guard chaplains serve Army Guard patients at Landstuhl because so many Army Guard chaplains are serving in other places, explained Air Guard Chaplain (Col.) John Ellington Jr., chief of the National Guard Chaplain Service. There are 75 to 100 Guard Soldiers at the medical center most days.

A dozen more Air Guard chaplains have asked to serve for three months at Landstuhl, he said.

"These kids give so much to their country and to the Guard," Chaplain Ellington said. "There's absolutely no reason not to give them first-class service. The Guard takes care of its own."

The duty is as rewarding as it is demanding, said Chaplain Hicks after busloads of patients who had been flown into nearby Ramstein Air Base arrived at Landstuhl recently.

"Welcome to Germany. I'm Chaplain Hicks. You're safe here. We're going to take care of you," he told Soldiers and Marines who walked off or were carried off the buses.

"It's a great privilege to do this, but it is also the greatest responsibility I've ever had," Chaplain Hicks said later. "I've never worked harder in my life."

"A chaplain brings a unique perspective to this situation," he said. "How are their spirits? How are their souls doing after what they have been through? Those are the questions we ask."

"A lot of my experience has helped me get ready to do this, but nothing really prepares you for what you face here," Chaplain Hicks said. He is the director of chaplain services for the Civil Air Patrol and has a doctorate in family development. He also has written books about coping with emotional and spiritual crises.

"Every minister deals with people who are in intensive care and who have cancer and with families who have had their children killed in car crashes, but there's always an end in sight," he said. "There's no end in sight here. You're just thrown into this for the 90 days that you are here. The buses don't wait."

There have been a lot of buses. Every U.S. servicemember who is injured in Iraq and Afghanistan comes to Landstuhl before being sent to medical facilities close to their home stations or to major military medical centers in the United States, said spokeswoman Marie Shaw-Fievez.

"It's hard because most of the patients are so young," she said. "We watch the news. We know that if something occurs in Iraq, we will be getting patients within 48 hours. We know that for every Soldier who is killed, there will be at least three or four who have been injured."

By the third week in October, Landstuhl doctors had cared for 16,415 servicemembers from Iraq and 2,905 from Afghanistan, Ms. Shaw-Fievez said. Nearly 5,000 of them have been National Guard troops since Operation Iraqi Freedom began in March 2003.

"This is the most engaging deployment in terms of pastoral care I've ever experienced" said Chaplain Sirianni, who has been a priest for 26 years and an Air Guard chaplain for 17 years. "Given the number of patients, it is a daunting task to maintain that care. But we do everything that we can because this ministry is important for helping these people lean into their futures."

The ministry is also important for Guard people who encounter problems while they are at Landstuhl.

Oregon Army Guard Spc. Robert Wojtecki, who was being examined because of abdominal pains, asked to talk about his situation with one of the Guard chaplains because they understand how the Guard does business, he said. He was happy to meet with Chaplain Sirianni.

"I've had better results with Guard chaplains," Specialist Wojtecki said. "I'm dealing with someone who knows the system I'm trying to work through and how it's different from the active-duty system. It's nice to have a chaplain who understands the extra loops and hoops."

There is one other advantage, said the citizen-Soldier who left his civilian job as a high-speed data technician to serve in Iraq as a mechanic on Chinook helicopters.

"This chaplain has been pulled out of his life just like I've been pulled out of mine," Specialist Wojtecki said. "He understands what I'm going through and how lonely it can get."

The chaplains also have to look out for each other and take an occasional day off so they do not fall victim to what Chaplain Hicks calls "compassion fatigue."

"You can put yourself in the psycho ward if you're not careful," he said.

Checking on the Guard chaplains is one reason Chaplain Ellington flies to Germany as often as he can.

"The stress can get to them," he said. "They're like Pony Express ponies. They keep going as hard and as fast as they can. I tell them what they're doing is important, but they need to take care of

themselves. Every pastor needs a pastor; every chaplain needs a chaplain."

One of the things that sustain them, Chaplain Hicks said, is the indomitable spirit of the American Soldiers.

They are more concerned about their buddies than they are about themselves. They are anxious to go home, but they also want to be with their units.

"Physically, they're here in Germany, but, mentally, they're still very much back in Iraq," he said. And they joke.

Chaplain Hicks told of one Soldier whose jaw was wired shut because an enemy bullet had gone in one cheek and out the other.

"You know what he told me?" Chaplain Hicks said. "He said, 'You know, chaplain, they're not very good shots.' "